

Commercial First Day Covers

Since the advent of special first-day-of-issue cancellations and the addition of cachets to adorn them, first day covers have provided many stamp collectors with an enjoyable way in which to pursue our pastime. Other stamp collectors, particularly those who refer to themselves as "philatelists," dismiss modern first day covers as philatelic (prepared and sent by or for a stamp collector) and, consequently, unworthy of serious consideration. According to that opinion, only commercial covers (used for business correspondence without any philatelic intent) should be included in any meaningful collection. Without taking sides in that disagreement, this exhibit is intended to show that there exists a sort of middle ground. It presents a selection of modern first day covers that are the result of commercial use.

In an earlier time, only those covers that were mailed at the issuing post office on the day designated for release of a stamp would receive the proper postmark. With increased popularity, servicing first day cover requests became big business for the Post Office Department and they adjusted their procedures to allow for processing of as many covers as possible even if it meant that the stamps were cancelled at a location hundreds of miles away from the city and on a day well after the date as shown in the postmark. That worked well for commercial interests wanting to use philatelic curiosity to draw attention to their mailings.

Today, new commercial uses of first day covers are considered to be scarce. However, during the span of years when the domestic letter rate ranged from 4-cents to 6-cents, they were produced frequently enough and by sufficient different companies to support a collecting specialty devoted to first day covers such as these.



First day cover of the 4¢ International Appliance Corporation stamp (Scott #1244), block of four, first day cover with a commercial card from International Appliance Corporation, Brooklyn, New York.

Some Commercial First Day Covers Look Philatelic

Beginning in 1957, Ayerst Laboratories, a pharmaceutical company, became one of the more prolific users of first day covers for commercial purposes. They sent their covers to doctors across America. The mailings were intended to build goodwill while providing advertising for the company's products. During the period of the promotion, doctors on their mailing list received a series of first day covers that featured virtually every commemorative stamp issued by the United States.

Because Ayerst Laboratories used Art Craft covers to convey their message, such covers are easily missed when looking through accumulations of first day covers. On the exterior, the only difference between this commercial first day cover and its philatelic counterpart is the return address on the back flap.



First day cover of the 5¢ Alliance for Progress stamp (Scott #1234) used for a commercial mailing from Ayerst Laboratories, with scanned images of the enclosure and the return address (from the back flap).

Commercial First Day Usage of a Se-Tenant Single

The centenary of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City was honored with a set of four stamps issued in a se-tenant form. In lieu of describing a single stamp in the body of the letter, Ayerst Laboratories prepared a special letterhead with a preprinted discussion of all four stamps.



First day cover of the 6¢ American Bald Eagle stamp (Scott #1387) used for a commercial mailing from Ayerst Laboratories, with scanned image of the enclosure.

Mailing Inspired by Stamp's Subject

While some companies were regular makers of first day covers regardless of the postal issue, other commercial uses appear to have been prompted specifically by the subject of the new stamp. This cover, featuring the Dental Health stamp that commemorated 100 years of the American Dental Association, was mailed to an orthodontist. Its enclosure, which discussed oral aseptics, was very likely promotional material for mouthwash sold by the Lever Brothers Company.



First day cover of the 4¢ Dental Health (and the centenary of the American Dental Association) stamp (Scott #1136) used for a commercial mailing from the Lever Brothers Company, with scanned image of the return address (from the back flap).

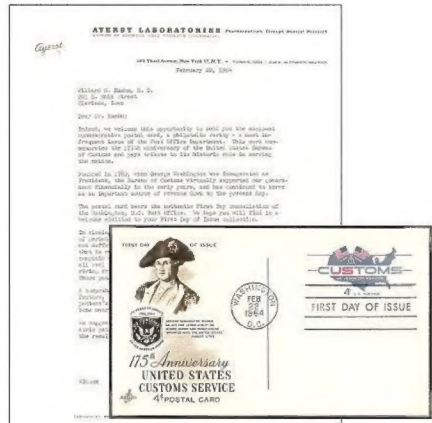
Stamp Subject Related to the Company's Location



First day cover of the 6¢ Illinois Statehood Sesquicentennial stamp (Scott #1338) used for a commercial mailing from the Preferred Business Service Corporation, with scanned images of the enclosure and the return address (from the back flap).

First Day Postal Card as a Promotional Favor

As part of the pharmaceutical company's extensive use of FDCs in their direct-mail advertising to the medical profession, Ayerst Laboratories mailed this unaddressed, commemorative postal card, with cachet, as an enclosure with the cover letter shown here. When separated from the cover letter, the card is indistinguishable as a commercial use. Note, also, that the First-Day-of-Issue cancel was applied even though the postal card is pre-cancelled.



First day cover of the 4¢ postal card celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the United States Customs Service (Scott 1255) enclosed in a commercial mailing from Ayerst Laboratories, with scanned image of the cover letter.

Commercial Use Was Not Limited to United States Stamps

The use of first day covers by Ayerst Laboratories for advertising purposes included stamps issued by authorities other than the United States. The covers shown here, featuring stamps from the United Nations and Canada, are examples of such uses. Even though the enclosures were not retained, the covers have been identified as commercial uses by the Ayerst return addresses on their back flaps.

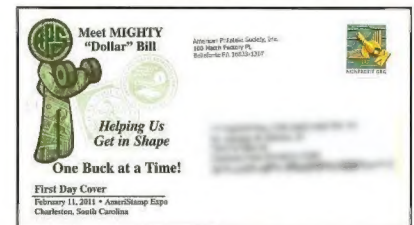


Commercial first day cover of the United Nations 6¢ Japanese Peace Bell stamp (Scott #233).



Commercial first day cover of the Canada 6¢ International Biological Programme stamp (Scott #507).

A Commercial First Day Cover with a twist: No Postmark!



First day cover of the non-denominated (5¢) Art Deco Bill stamp used for a commercial mailing from the American Philatelic Society.

This usage, requesting donations from APS members, was considered to be sufficiently out of the ordinary to receive coverage in the philatelic press. The article reproduced here is from page 30 of the March 28, 2011 issue of *Lin's Stamp News*.

APS mailed donation solicitation letters in cacheted FDCs

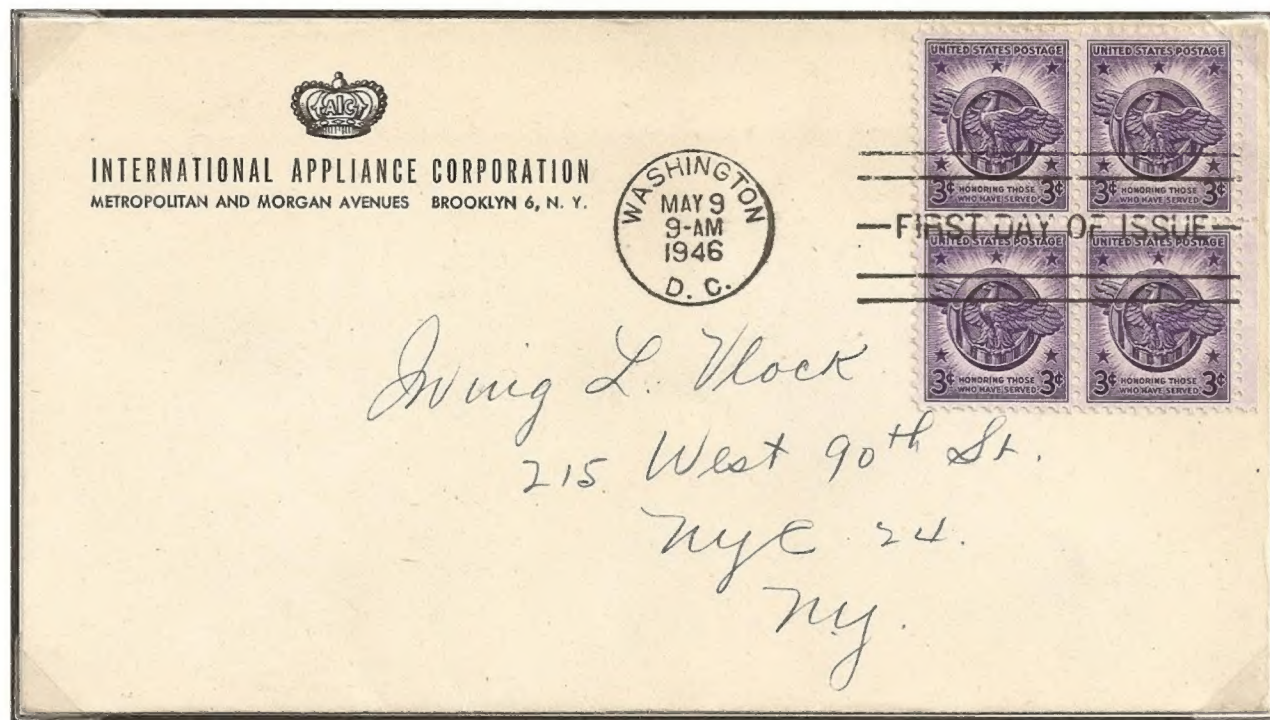


Commercial First Day Covers

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Veterans of World War II Issue (Scott #940), block of four, first day cover with a commercial corner card from International Appliance Corporation, Brooklyn, New York.

Some Commercial First Day Covers Look Philatelic

Beginning in 1957, Ayerst Laboratories, a pharmaceutical company, became one of the more prolific users of first day covers for commercial purposes. They sent their covers to doctors across America. The mailings were intended to build goodwill while providing advertising for the company's products. During the period of the promotion, doctors on their mailing list received a series of first day covers that featured virtually every commemorative stamp issued by the United States.

Because Ayerst Laboratories used Art Craft covers to convey their message, such covers are easily missed when looking through accumulations of first day covers. On the exterior, the only difference between this commercial first day cover and its philatelic counterpart is the return address on the back flap.

AYERST LABORATORIES
685 Third Avenue
New York 17, N.Y.



AYERST LABORATORIES *Pharmaceuticals Through Medical Research*
DIVISION OF AMERICAN HOME PRODUCTS CORPORATION

685 Third Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. • YUkon 6-1000 / Cable: ALPHAMIN, New York

W. BOYD O'CONNOR
PRESIDENT

August 17, 1963

Abraham G. White, M. D.
The Brooklyn Hospital
DeKalb Avenue at Ashland Place
Brooklyn 1, New York

Dear Dr. White:

This First Day of Issue Stamp commemorates the second anniversary of the Alliance for Progress, which will be honored simultaneously with similar stamp issuances by El Salvador, Costa Rica, Panama, Nicaragua, Honduras, and the Canal Zone.

This multiple-stamp issuance is the first ever initiated by the United States. Previously, the U.S. had participated in dual issuances with Canada and Mexico.

The Alliance for Progress sponsors a program of inter-American cooperative assistance, having as its objective the development of new ways of solving common communication problems for the mutual benefit of the American nations. Similarly, an important objective of medical science is the development of new and improved therapeutic agents for the control of disease and the benefit of all mankind.

One notable achievement in recent years, a milestone in the field of intractable disease, was the introduction of "Mysoline" (Primidone) in the treatment of epilepsy.

FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

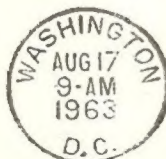


A BRIDGE OF
CO-OPERATION

2nd Anniversary



ALLIANCE
FOR
PROGRESS



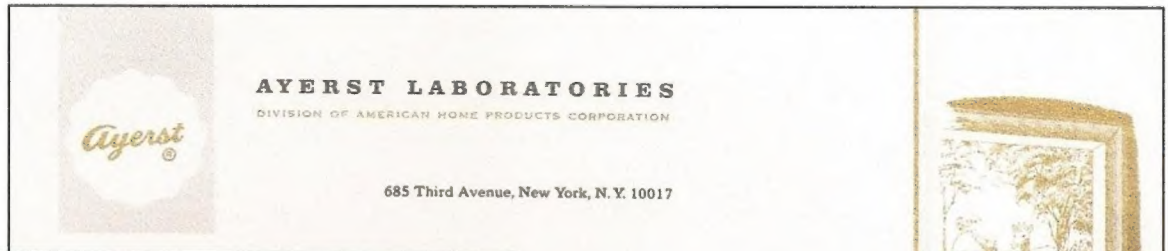
FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

Abraham G. White, M.D.
The Brooklyn Hospital
DeKalb Avenue At Ashland Place
Brooklyn 1, New York

First day cover of the 5¢ Alliance for Progress stamp (Scott #1234) used for a commercial mailing from Ayerst Laboratories, with scanned images of the enclosure and the return address (from the back flap).

Commercial First Day Usage of a *Se-Tenant* Single

The centenary of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City was honored with a set of four stamps issued in *se-tenant* form. In lieu of describing a single stamp in the body of the letter, Ayerst Laboratories prepared a special letterhead with a preprinted discussion of all four stamps.



May 6, 1970

confronted with a multiple
every drug category...from as
for example, the antibiotic
specifically, ampicillin.

Under the name of PENBRITIN*
a more brand name ampicillins
serving years, we have
every utilizable size and
demand, while maintaining
best possible cost.



BIRTHDAY OF A REMARKABLE INSTITUTION

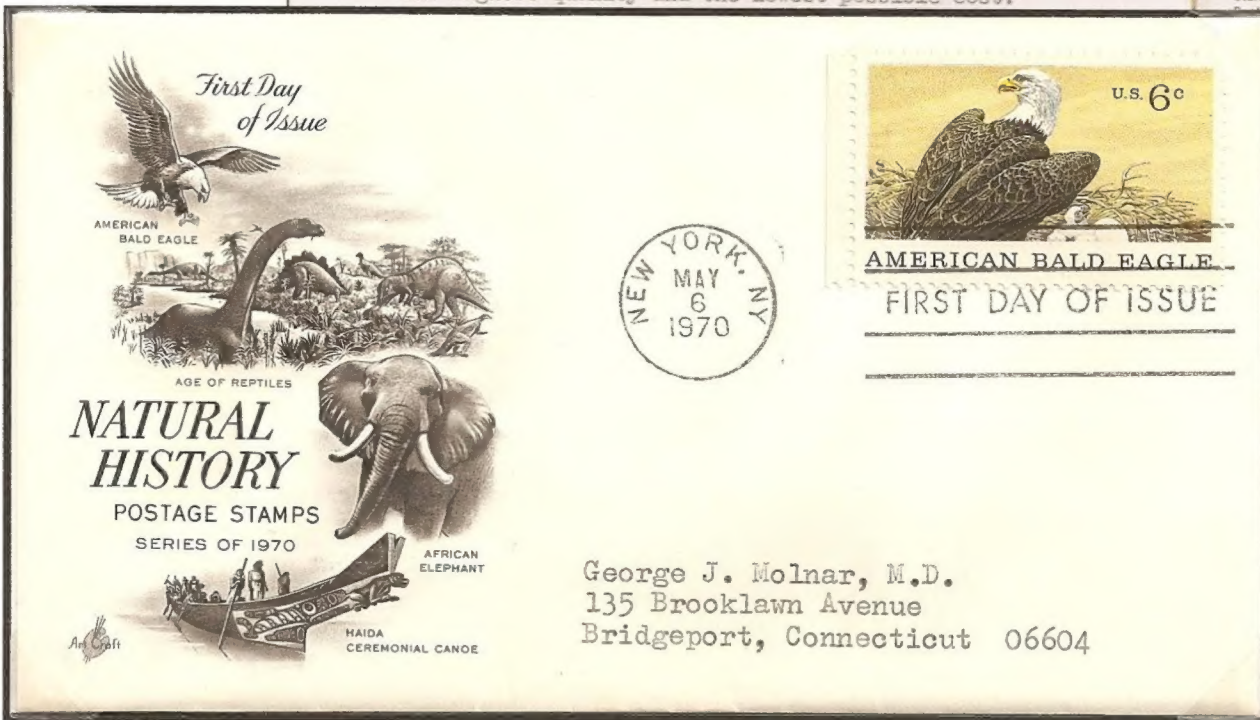
Every year the American Museum of Natural History plays host to three million people. Few would quarrel with the observation that this is an extraordinary institution — or that its one hundredth anniversary should be marked with more than ordinary recognition.

This is keenly evident in the spectacular series of four commemorative stamps issued by the U.S. Post Office Department. You find one of the following themes depicted on First Day Cover en-

American Bald Eagle
national emblem, a
symbol of courage and
strength: it was drawn from
museum displays. One
could hardly put to find a
specimen anywhere to-

African Elephant Herd
largest living land
als: always a big fa-
with young and old
The art was based on
lay that dominates a
hall of the museum.
Ida Ceremonial Ca-
rom the wealth of In-
lore: a 64 foot war
It contains figures
chief and his party en-
to a marriage cere-

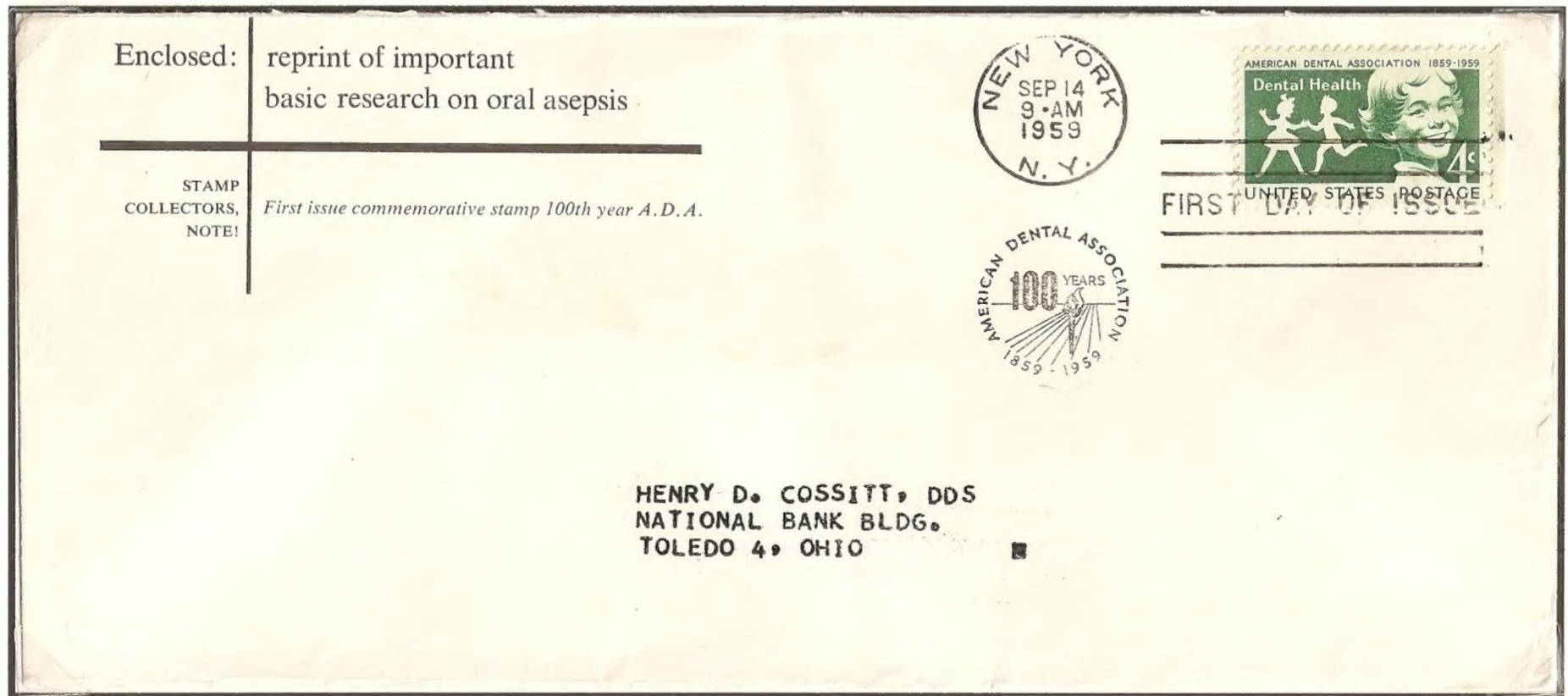
The Age of Reptiles
 dinosaur, stegosaurus,
 ilosaurus: monstrous
 for monstrous crea-
 Those shown on the
 were adapted from a
 mural now hanging at
 eabody Museum of
 University.



First day cover of the 6¢ American Bald Eagle stamp (Scott #1387) used for a commercial mailing from Ayerst Laboratories, with scanned image of the enclosure.

Mailing Inspired by Stamp's Subject

While some companies were regular mailers of first day covers regardless of the postal issue, other commercial uses appear to have been prompted specifically by the subject of the new stamp. This cover, featuring the Dental Health stamp that commemorated 100 years of the American Dental Association, was mailed to an orthodontist. Its enclosure, which discussed oral asepsis, was very likely promotional material for mouthwash sold by the Lever Brothers Company.

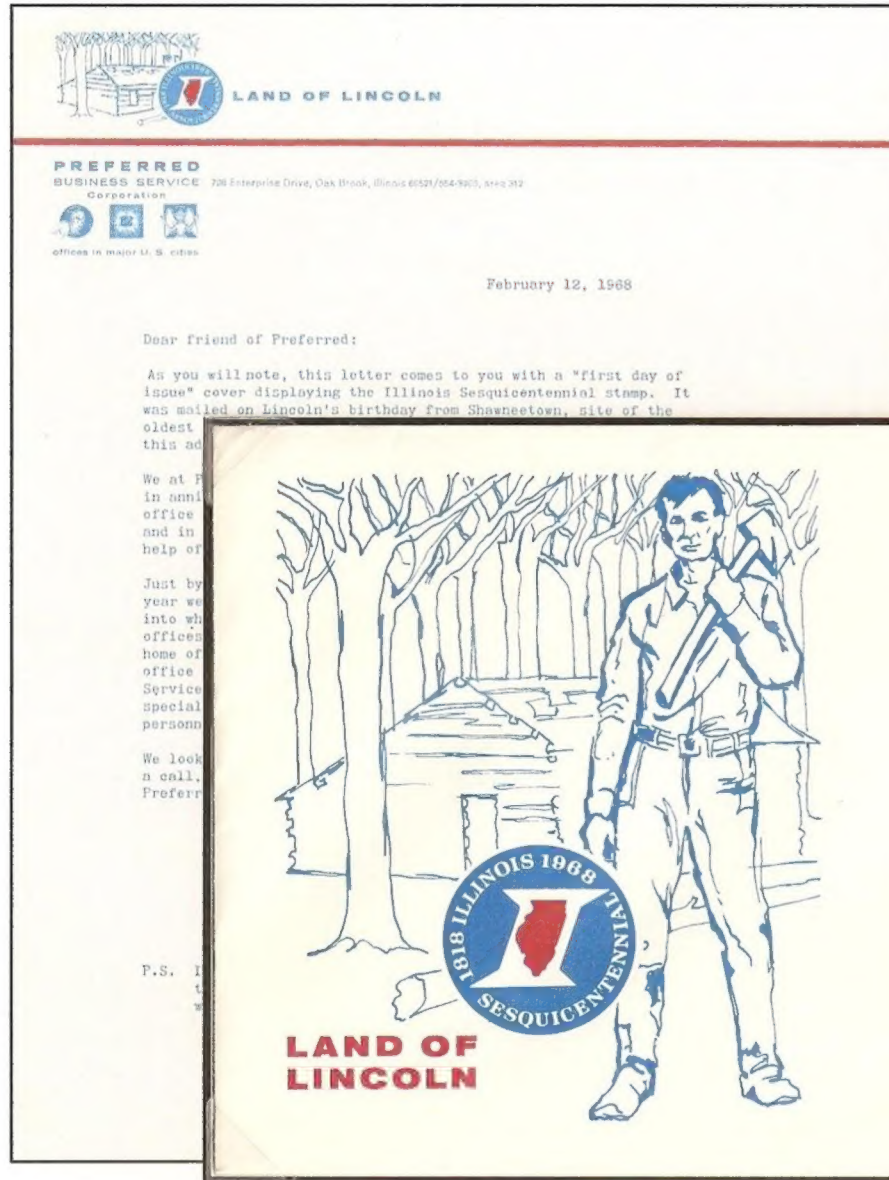


LEVER BROTHERS COMPANY • 390 PARK AVENUE • NEW YORK 22, N. Y.

First day cover of the 4¢ Dental Health (and the centenary of the American Dental Association) stamp (Scott #1135) used for a commercial mailing from the Lever Brothers Company, with scanned image of the return address (from the back flap).

Stamp Subject Related to the Company's Location

The use of first day covers for a mass mailing from this provider of temporary office services may have been motivated by state pride. The location of the company headquarters, in Oak Brook, has a distinct relationship to the stamp's celebration of the Illinois sequential of statehood.



First day cover of the 6¢ Illinois Statehood Sesquicentennial stamp (Scott #1339) used for a commercial mailing from the Preferred Business Service Corporation, with scanned images of the enclosure and the return address (from the back flap).

First Day Postal Card as a Promotional Favor

As part of the pharmaceutical company's extensive use of FDCs in their direct-mail advertising to the medical profession, Ayerst Laboratories mailed this unaddressed, commemorative postal card, with cachet, as an enclosure with the cover letter shown here. When separated from the cover letter, the card is indistinguishable as a commercial use. Note, also, that the First-Day-of-Issue cancel was applied even though the postal card is precanceled.

Ayerst
®

AYERST LABORATORIES *Pharmaceuticals Through Medical Research*
DIVISION OF AMERICAN HOME PRODUCTS CORPORATION

685 Third Avenue, New York 17, N. Y. • YUkon 6-1000 / Cable: ALPHAMIN, New York

February 22, 1964

Willard G. Kuehn, M. D.
201 E. Main Street
Clarinda, Iowa

Dear Dr. Kuehn:

Indeed, we welcome this opportunity to send you the enclosed commemorative postal card, a philatelic rarity - a most infrequent issue of the Post Office Department. This card commemorates the 175th anniversary of the United States Bureau of Customs and pays tribute to its historic role in serving the nation.

Founded in 1789, when George Washington was inaugurated as President, the Bureau of Customs virtually supported our government financially in the early years, and has continued to serve as an important source of revenue down to the present day.

The postal card bears the authentic First Day cancellation of the Washington, D.C. Post Office. We hope you will find it a welcome addition to your First Day of Issue collection.

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WBO:em

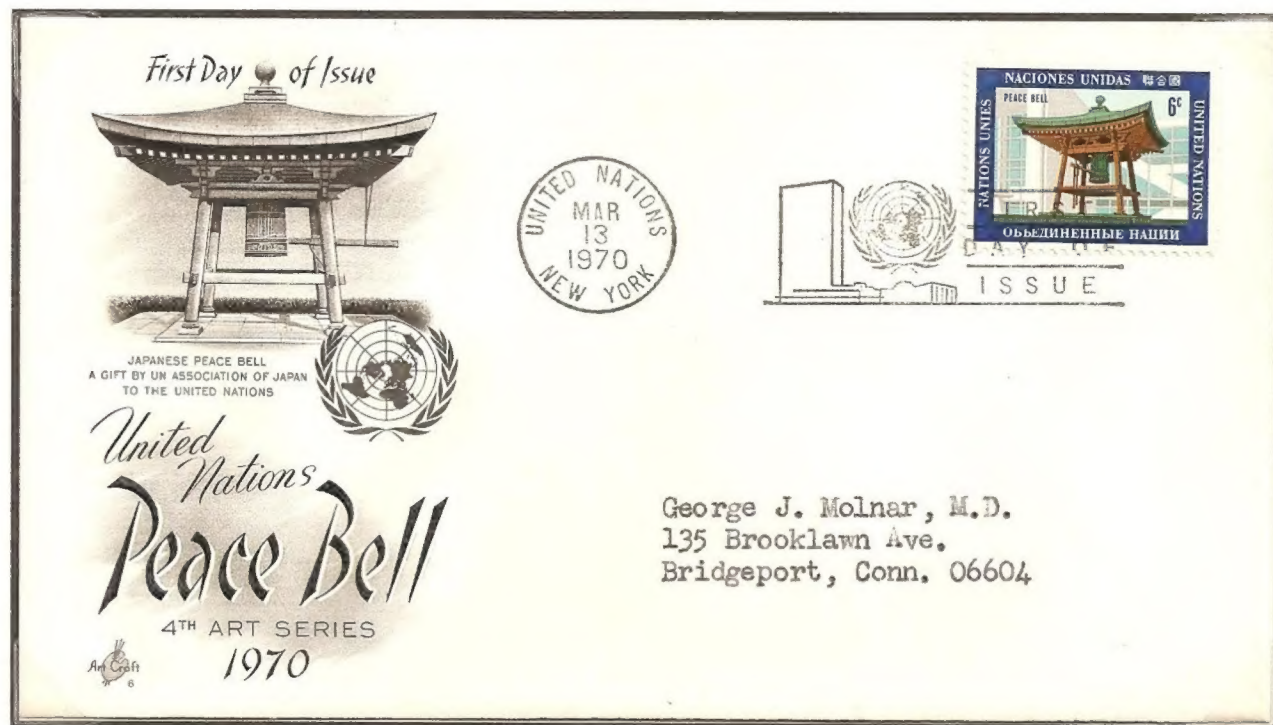
Laboratories: R



First day cover of the 4¢ postal card celebrating the 175th Anniversary of the United States Customs Service (Scott UX50) enclosed in a commercial mailing from Ayerst Laboratories, with scanned image of the cover letter

Commercial Use Was Not Limited to United States Stamps

The use of first day covers by Ayerst Laboratories for advertising purposes included stamps issued by authorities other than the United States. The covers shown here, featuring stamps from the United Nations and Canada, are examples of such uses. Even though the enclosures were not retained, the covers have been identified as commercial uses by the Ayerst return addresses on their back flaps.



Commercial first day cover of the United Nations 6¢ Japanese Peace Bell stamp (Scott #203).



Commercial first day cover of the Canada 6¢ International Biological Programme stamp (Scott #507).

A Commercial First Day Cover with a twist: No Postmark!



Meet MIGHTY
"Dollar" Bill

Helping Us
Get in Shape

One Buck at a Time!

First Day Cover

February 11, 2011 • AmeriStamp Expo
Charleston, South Carolina

American Philatelic Society, Inc.
100 Match Factory PL
Bellefonte PA 16823-1367



First day cover of the non-denominated (5¢) Art Deco Bird coil stamp used for a commercial mailing from the American Philatelic Society.

This usage, requesting donations from APS members, was considered to be sufficiently out of the ordinary to receive coverage in the philatelic press. The article reproduced here is from page 30 of the March 28, 2011 issue of *Linn's Stamp News*.

MODERN FDCs BY LLOYD DE VRIES

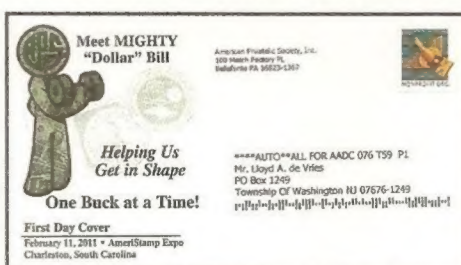
APS mailed donation solicitation letters in cacheted FDCs

First-day covers have, at times, been used as advertising media, carrying messages to prospective clients and customers.

The United States non-denominated (5¢) Art Deco Bird coil stamp was issued Feb. 11 at the American Philatelic Society's AmeriStamp Expo in Charleston, S.C.

The APS mailed all of its members with U.S. addresses an FDC franked with the stamp. Inside was a pitch for the Mighty Buck Club, which asks members to donate at least \$12, or one buck a month, to the society and the American Philatelic Research Library.

The Art Deco Bird coil stamp is for use by not-for-profit organizations such as the APS. The organizations pay more than 5¢ for each piece, depending on the size of the envelope and the degree of



This cacheted first-day cover for the new United States non-denominated (5¢) Art Deco Bird coil stamp was used by the American Philatelic Society to mail a solicitation for a donation.

sorting the organization has performed. So while the stamp costs 5¢, the nonprofit mailer pays an additional fee at the time of mailing.

According to APS executive director Ken Martin, the society paid about 11½¢ per cover in addition to the stamp.

Advertising mailings using FDCs have been scarce in recent years, so

FDC collectors should be thrilled with a cacheted cover that actually went through the mail.

These Mighty Buck Club FDCs also show the proper usage of the new issue, with a single stamp affixed.

It's likely that all other FDCs for this issue will have either nine of the stamps to cover the 44¢ first-class rate, or one or two of the new stamps

plus other, earlier issues to fulfill the rate.

There are some aspects of the APS cover that might bother some collectors.

Collectors were told the FDCs were all mailed on the first day of issue, but there are no postmarks on them to indicate when they were mailed. That is in accordance with regulations for nonprofit bulk mail, but it's disappointing to FDC collectors who are accustomed to a postmark on their covers.

All of the FDCs that were mailed are addressed. Addresses on covers displease some FDC collectors, although addressed FDCs in a situation like this are appropriate and should be more desirable.

More of a problem is that the flaps on the envelopes are all sealed. An FDC collector who wants to read the pitch or respond with

a donation must open the envelope, which could damage it. From the FDC collector's point of view, it would have been better if the flaps had been tucked in, as was usual for bulk mailings in the first part of the 20th century.

Collectors who want an example of this unusual FDC but who are not APS members should keep an eye on dealers' dollar boxes at stamp shows or shops. Because many APS members are not FDC collectors, you might start seeing the covers offered by dealers before too long.

Collectors who would like to learn more about the American Philatelic Society, the world's largest nonprofit society for stamp collectors, can write to APS, 100 Match Factory Place, Bellefonte, PA 16823; or visit online at www.stamps.org. ■